

COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY SERVICES
(Standing Committee of Berkeley County Council)

Chairman: Mr. Timothy J. Callanan, District No. 2

A **special meeting** of the Committee on Community Services, Standing Committee of Berkeley County Council, was held on **Monday, June 27, 2011**, in the Assembly Room of the Berkeley County Administration Building, 1003 Highway 52, Moncks Corner, South Carolina, at 6:01 p.m.

PRESENT: Chairman Timothy J. Callanan, Council District No. 2 entered at 6:06 p.m.; Committee Member Cathy S. Davis, Council District No. 4; Committee Member Dennis Fish, Council District No. 5; Committee Member Caldwell Pinckney, Jr., Council District No. 7; Supervisor Daniel W. Davis; Ms. Nicole Ewing, County Attorney; Ms. Elizabeth Cannon, Assistant County Attorney; and Ms. Catherine R. Windham, Acting Clerk of County Council. Committee Member Robert O. Call, Jr., Council District No. 3 was excused.

ALSO PRESENT: Council Member Phillip Farley, District No. 1, ex officio; Council Member Jack Schurlknight, District No. 6, ex officio; Council Member Steve Davis, District No. 8, ex officio.

In accordance with the Freedom of Information Act, the electronic and print media were duly notified.

Acting Chairman D. Fish: "I'd like to call the Community Services meeting to order. First on the agenda, I would like to have.... Mr. Boling, will you give the invocation? I will lead, and we'll all stand, and have the Pledge of the Allegiance. All stand please."

INVOCATION- Led by Mr. Chip Boling

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE- Led by Acting Chairman D. Fish

Acting Chairman D. Fish: "We only have one item on the agenda tonight and that would be..."

A. Ms. Barbara A. Flynn, TriCounty Link, Community Outreach Presentation.

Ms. Barbara Flynn: "To our County Supervisor, Mr. Davis, Councilman Callanan, Chairman of the Community Service Committee, and Members, and Members of the Berkeley County Council, good evening."

Committee Member C. Pinckney: "Good evening."

Ms. Barbara Flynn: "I am Barbara Flynn. I am the Community Outreach Coordinator for Tri-County Link. With me tonight, we have our Executive Director, Mr. William Hutto, our Operations Manager, Brian Worboys and our Public Route Manager, Tyra Gattist. Tonight, we

are here to discuss the current and future role, public transit plays in our everyday lives here in Berkeley County. We will share facts that will provide information of public transit within the eight districts of our County. While no one can dispute the importance that public transit plays in moving people, enhancing and stimulating the economic growth, reducing traffic congestion, and commute time, and it also reduces the amount of non-productivity time that we spend waiting on highways. No one can dispute the importance it's going to play. One Tri-County Link bus will reduce, by almost and maybe, thirty-two cars off of the road. All of this background information you'll receive, leads me to two key factors. One, Berkeley County's projected household growth of thirty-six percent by 2035, and two, the changing make-up of our population. Examples are, the aging baby boomer population is really the largest aging population ever. Also, we have to take into consideration our growth, our minority growth. These are key factors and I'm going to turn this over now to Mr. Hutto who will be doing our presentation and thank you."

Mr. William Hutto: "Good evening. I'm Will Hutto and I'd like to thank you all again for the opportunity to speak with you tonight. I hope by doing this, you leave here with a better understanding of who we are, and what we're doing, and look together at the opportunities of working to better serve Berkeley County. Isn't technology wonderful (referring to the power point). Well, while technology is catching up with us, I'm going ahead. Let's don't waste any time. I want to talk a little bit about Tri-County Link's Mission. The Mission Statement best describes our business model. The key components of the Mission Statement are Planning, Developing, and Implementing. We implement through a series of coordination, and leveraging of funding and resources. We create public private partnerships and all of this together has sustained us for fifteen years. Now to give you a little....when I say fifteen years let me give you a little history of where we came from. How many of you remember the Betsy System? Shows your age doesn't it?"

Committee Member D. Fish: "Remember the what?"

Mr. William Hutto: "The old Betsy System was the Berkeley County public transit system of yesterday and we are now a growth of the old Betsy System. In 1996, Berkeley, Charleston and Dorchester Counties formed together and decided through resolution, Berkeley County Resolution 96-12, that they would form BCDRTMA. That's Berkeley, Charleston, Dorchester Rural Transportation Management Association. Each county contributed \$30,000 each for three years. Berkeley County invested \$90,000. At the end of the three years the goal was to be self-sustaining. Here we are in year fifteen. In 1996, RTM was the traditional rural system. That is early morning in and late afternoon out. Well today it's not your father's rural transit system anymore. Today we offer a variety of services. We offer flag stop, rural service spread among the three counties, we contract service to human service agencies and adult daycares. We provide non-emergency Medicaid transportation. We provide commuter solutions offering seamless transportation from the rural areas into the metro area by way of a reciprocal transfer agreement with CARTA. It allows the passenger to pay one fare each way and as an example, let me share this with you. Someone can get on our commuter solutions bus in Cross or Saint Stephen. They pay our fare and they continue on that bus down to Super K-Mart in Otranto, which is the transfer point. At that point, we give them a transfer, a pass, and they present it to the CARTA bus and they continue on free of charge. So they pay one fare and they

can go downtown Charleston and back in the afternoon. Back in the afternoon, the converse of that, or inverse, whatever you want to say is true. They pay the CARTA fare, CARTA issues them a transfer, they get on our bus free and we take them back to where they came from. So, as a result, residents are enjoying more transit options in the Tri-County area than ever before. In Charleston County as a result of the half-cent sales referendum, residents of Charleston County have more transit options than any other county in the state. Now you take into account what we do in rural Charleston and what CARTA does in the urban section of Charleston County. You put that together, no other county in the state has that amount of public transportation offered. Because of Santee Cooper's support here in Berkeley County, commuter solutions was an initiative that they treated as an employee benefit and residents of Berkeley and Dorchester Counties are enjoying transit options previously unheard of. Tri-County Link is not your typical rural transit system. We truly work to link the lowcountry. Look at the word "LINK". And we look at the word "L" we look ahead, but always with an eye to the past. "I" we invest our resources wisely; "N", new is not a necessity folks, we refurbished. The building we're in, come take a look. We're proud of it. It's just renovated. We have vehicles that are renovated or are refurbished as well. We have some new vehicles. Office furniture, we're not too proud to refurbish office furniture and use it. Come take a look, we're proud of it. And "K", we know that at the end of the day, we did the best we could with the resources that we invested. But we also understand we cannot be everything to everyone. Partners have been and will always be a major part of Tri-County Link's business plan. When formed, Berkeley, Charleston and Dorchester counties partnered together to establish what we have today. SCDOT and FTA, Federal Transit Administration with grant funding are our partners. The COG, BCDCOG has been a wonderful partner. They do our, what I call hard accounting, planning, we have a line of credit with the COG. It's another level of scrutiny that's kept us on the straight and narrow. Santee Cooper, Berkeley Industries, Dorchester County Economic Development, Berkeley County Chamber of Commerce, just a list and it goes on. It's certainly not all of the partners that we have. Berkeley County is the eleventh largest county in South Carolina. Since the census of 2000, population with the 2010 census has grown to almost 178,000; 10% increase from the year 2000. By the year 2015, population in Berkeley County is project to be about 186,000 and by 235 our population was double to 231,000 people. Currently, we have four commuter solution routes in Berkeley County. Four deviated fixed routes, B101 which covers Moncks Corner, Cross, Pineville, St Stephen, Alvin, Jamestown, Schulerville and Macedonia. B102, which begins in Moncks Corner and travels through Hanahan and Goose Creek. B104, Moncks Corner, Bonneau, St Stephen and Santee Circle. B105, covers portions of Huger, Cainhoy, Wando and Mt Pleasant and we have some additional service provided in Berkeley County through a route that we attribute to Dorchester County. It's what we call D305. Mr. Farley, you have a route that runs through your section which is B102 in our commuter solution routes. Mr. Callanan, you serve Daniel Island, Cainhoy, Huger, B105 serves that area. Mr. Call, B102 in the commuter routes serve your area. Ms. Davis, B102. Mr. Fish, you have D305 which is a Dorchester route and all of the commuter solutions routes. Mr. Schurlknight, B105 and the commuter routes serve your area. Mr. Pinckney, B101 and commuter route in Cross. Did you know we had a commuter route in Cross?"

Committee Member C. Pinckney: "Good, outstanding."

Mr. William Hutto: "And Mr. Davis, we have two routes, B101, B104 and a commuter route that also serves your area. Our annual budget is 3.8 million dollars. That's for the fiscal year 2010 and 2011. Our fiscal year ends this coming Thursday, the end of June. So we run July 1 to June 30th fiscal year. I think what's on a particular note, is that our federal and state grants amount to 1.4 million dollars of that 3.8 million dollar budget. Now, in other words, 38% of our funding comes from federal and state grants. 62% of our funding is generated. Now, what also is significant is that those numbers are exactly the opposite of the national average. In other words, the national average says that 60-65% of funding comes from federal and state grants and 30-35% comes from generated funds. We're very pleased to have the successes that we've had and we wanted to share our successes with you. The generated funding, or I should say the revenues or profits from those generated funds, are used to match federal and state grant dollars. You have up here, federal funding initiatives, FTA that's Federal Transit Administration Section 53-16; Job Access Reverse Commutes. Those funds are used to help fund the commuter solutions routes as well as Section 53-17 which is New Freedom. New Freedom goes beyond ADA. And then section 53-11, that's our general rural funding from FTA. The State Mass Transit Fund does not amount to that much money as compared to the federal dollars but every penny helps. The bottom line is, if we have \$20 dollars in local money, or in a local match; it will, it could possibly, generate \$80 in grant funding. Another way to look at it is we can take \$20 and put a \$100 worth of service on the road. Section 53-11 has three grant funding areas, capital, administration and operations. Capital is funded 80/20, in other words, 80% federal, 20% local. Admin is 50/50; Operation is 80% federal, 20% local. Section 53-16 and 17 funds capital and operations at the ratio of 80/20, 80% federal, 20% local. It's nice to be recognized. Everybody loves a pat on the back every once in a while and we've received some recognition that I'd like to share with you. SCDOT selected Tri-County Link as the best rural system or the best public system in the years 2008 and 2010. After which is the American Public Transit Association, recognized our marketing program for commuter solutions. NATO, which is...excuse me, I didn't.... NATO, which is the National Association Development Organization, has recognized the commuter solutions efforts as well. As recent as last week, we were recognized by the Secretary of Transportation, Rayla Hood, Federal Transit Administration, in his official blog. As I said, it's nice to be recognized. It's nice to have a pat on the back, but it's more important to be vigilant in providing services. We are very vigilant when we look and deal with our business partners, our contract service. Advertising on our buses; we probably have more advertising on our buses, than any other transit system in the state. We do that to create revenue. I'm sure, or I would hope that all of you have seen our buses with advertising on it. Santee Cooper does a tremendous job with advertising on the commuter buses and we are in the process of changing those routes right now. So you'll see a whole new advertising campaign from Santee Cooper. We do leverage funds. That's a part of life. We have to. We look at sustainable growth. We are very proactive in our planning and we have a very good record of successful implementation of service. You know, I moved to Berkeley County in 1969 and boy what a difference. In 1969, I bet I knew everybody that walked the streets of Moncks Corner. How many of you can say you know somebody in Moncks Corner now? Life is really changed. What's life going to be like in forty years from now? We need to invest in alternatives. We can't pave enough roads, folks. Tri-County Link is a good investment. Tri-County Link encourages economic development. We provide safe reliable transportation and we improve the quality of life for everyone in Berkeley County and the Tri-County area. Well, in the past folks, everybody remembers Betsy. The three

counties had a vision and that vision, out of that vision, grew BCDRTMA. By the way, I didn't mention this, but we still are BCDRTMA. That's our legally incorporated name. We are a public non-profit. We are doing business as Tri-County Link because that name better defines or better shows what we are, our mission and our goal, for the Tri-County area. So we are doing business at Tri-County Link, but we are still what we were in 1996. We have a business model that's based on slow methodical growth, growth that is self-sustaining, seeking alternative funding. At present, we have ninety employees, better than ninety employees. We have fifty buses on the road daily in the Tri-County area. We have an annual budget, as I shared with you earlier, of 3.8 million; have system mileage of 2.2 million a year. Ridership is 185,000 of which, better than 50% of the ridership is in Berkeley County. We have commuter routes; we have flag stops, deviated fixed routes. Don't you just love all those little names that are just very specific to the industry? Every industry has got them. We have contract services, we have Medicaid transportation. We do community outreach. We do advertising on our buses. We develop business partners, public-private partnerships. We have park-n-rides. Who in the world thought in 1996, that a rural transportation system would have a park-n-ride? We have nine park-n-rides throughout the Tri-County area now. We have WiFi on our fixed route buses. We're the only transit system in the state that offers free WiFi on our buses. So when people are riding in on the commuter routes they can log on. They can do their work. Santee Cooper actually tracks the amount of time that their employees are on, in commute, and they're working. We have security cameras, both on our buses and in our facility. We have a website. Website wasn't even a part of our vocabulary in 1996. Please go to ridetricountylink.com. And best of all, we have a mascot. We have a low-country tree frog that's called Linky. We've received local, state, national and international recognition. But all of that pales in comparison to the service, I think, we provide to the Tri-County area that we are very proud of. I want to talk a little bit about rural and urban and I'm sure you know what I'm talking about but, there two designated providers in the Tri-County area. Rural provider being RTMA or Tri-County Link and CARTA. That designation is made by the Federal Transit Administration and we are in a very fluid area or county. What's happening? Bedroom communities are building. The urban areas are creeping out. So now we're going to soon have a redefining of service lines between urban and rural. Mr. Callanan is very familiar with the efforts of trying to get transit onto Daniel Island. It's been an argument. Is it a urban or is it a rural area? All of that, all of those questions have gone back and forth. New lines will be drawn shortly from the 2010 census. I want to mention a little bit about COG and how I feel that Tri-County Link is proactive in planning. Tri-County Link Board felt that it would be necessary in going forward, to look at a feasibility study of the possible joining of the two transit systems, the urban and the rural system; especially with the economy, the growth that we are experiencing in both Berkeley and Dorchester Counties. And so the COG is looking at a non-binding, feasibility study, looking at the pros and cons. I can tell you up front that I'm not real excited...thank you Jack (re: water)... I'm not real excited about Tri-County Link going away because I'm real proud of what our people have been able to do. But, when we look at the feasibility study, and it shows that it may be the correct way to go, we may be able to service the residents of the Tri-County area better as a joined or combined unit. Then, we need to act. So looking forward we've got population growth, we've got an aging population. Not only does Berkeley County have population growth, we have regional growth. We have to decide if we are going to be proactive or reactive in what we are doing. We certainly need to engage in public transit in land use planning. We're going to continue developing partnerships. I think what's

most important is what we're starting here tonight. There's a line of communication. The line of communication between you and us, because you have the pulse of the community, we need to know what's needed and we need to keep those lines of communication open. Communication is going to be the key. I appreciate all of your attentiveness. I've tried to be concise. It's really hard to condense fifteen years into a few minutes. I'll be happy to answer any questions and if I can't answer them, I've brought backup. People that are out there working everyday and making this happen. Thank you very much for your time."

Chairman T. Callanan: "Thank you. Actually, I do have one question for you."

Mr. William Hutto: "Yes, sir."

Chairman T. Callanan: "You know we've been discussing this, with regards to areas that are...cannot be served by Tri-County Link. But are under these, I guess the service area of CARTA. But CARTA gets grant money, correct?"

Mr. William Hutto: "Well CARTA is funded through the Federal Transit Administration, under a different section than we are. They're funded under section 53-09 for urban. As an urban provider, they deal directly with the FTA. The rural providers that are funded under 53-11 deal with SCDOT. The money is channeled through DOT, the office of Public Transit and then down. I know that's confusing but we're both grant funded."

Chairman T. Callanan: "Right, but the point was that your grant funding, you don't rely on any funding from the County, correct?"

Mr. William Hutto: "We do not."

Chairman T. Callanan: "Ok, they are also grant funded but they get some money from the ½ penny sales tax in Charleston County."

Mr. William Hutto: "That's correct."

Chairman T. Callanan: "So, the thing that I cannot understand at all is why Berkeley County gets...if they are responsible for the urban areas, and urban includes suburban, and our federal tax dollars are going to Berkeley County, Berkeley County federal tax dollars going to them; why is Berkeley County completely boxed out of any sort of CARTA service?"

Mr. William Hutto: "That's a question that needs to be directed to the CARTA board. Berkeley County is not the only, and I shouldn't say this, but Berkeley County is not the only area that's boxed out of CARTA's service. Summerville is an urban area."

Chairman T. Callanan: "Right."

Mr. William Hutto: "There is no service in Summerville."

Chairman T. Callanan: "I don't mind if it was a 100% paid for by the one penny sales tax. They can do whatever they want with it in Charleston County borders, but as soon as they start taking our federal tax dollars and telling the federal government that your service area includes the urban areas of Berkeley and Dorchester County, I think you're actually, you're actually taking our money. I think Charleston is actually taking our money and using it for their purposes. You know, that's the lesson I've learned in all this research here. I think there's a misinterpretation out there that CARTA is some sort of Charleston County entity and it's not."

Mr. William Hutto: "That's correct. I agree with you."

Chairman T. Callanan: "It's one of those things I think as a County, we need to look into to see if they are going to take our federal tax dollars that they provide an adequate amount of service for it. Thank you."

Mr. William Hutto: "Thank you very much."

Council Member J. Schurlknight: "Mr. Chairman?"

Chairman T. Callanan: "Yes, Mr. Schurlknight?"

Council Member J. Schurlknight: "Mr. Hutto, the first thing I want to do is say I really appreciate everything that y'all have done. I remember the Betsy buses, back in the day. I was just looking at the picture of this bus here and seeing them on the road thanks to you and your staff and the partners; looking ahead in the vision that y'all had to plan for this. I think y'all have done a remarkable job. Always hear good things about this especially with the price of gas. The park-n-ride has really helped out a lot of people in this county, to be able to do that."

Mr. William Hutto: "Thank you very much. I think this goes back to our original start in 1996 when we were told, you've got three years to get your act together or you could go home. Hopefully, we got our act together. It does not mean that we don't need money. Everyone needs money to expand and grow. But, we were very quick in adopting a business model. We run our company and it is our company, as a business and that's the only way we can run it."

Council Member J. Schurlknight: "Yeah, I know back in...during that same time you're talking about, I'm talking about trying to elevate it. One of the things I'd heard a number of times is let's go ahead and shoot Betsy and put her out of her misery."

Mr. William Hutto: "Yeah."

Council Member J. Schurlknight: "Let's do away with that and I, for one, appreciate that y'all didn't take that role and that y'all moved forward with this thing and got some real, real, nice transportation out there."

Mr. William Hutto: "Thank you. I appreciate your time and I know you have a lot on your agenda."

Council Member S. Davis: "Mr. Chairman?"

Mr. William Hutto: "Yes. Mr. Davis?"

Chairman T. Callanan: "Mr. Davis?"

Council Member S. Davis: "Mr. Hutto, I just wanted to say to you, I appreciate. Berkeley County is very rural county in a lot of aspects. I grew up as a little boy and my dad didn't have any cars and he used to get up every morning at 4:00, real bitterly cold, and he would walk out to the cross at Hwy 52 and Russellville and he would actually have to hitch-hike to Braswell Shipyard. It sure is refreshing and rewarding to know that there's been a transformation in reference to Betsy and its creation, and the difference you have made in the lives of many individuals in the rural part of the County. There are still a lot of folks who haven't moved tremendously beyond the hardship my father experienced for lack of having private transportation. So, I too, share in commending the tremendous effort. I'm going to tell you one thing, but y'all are just quietly done a very, very great job. I mean no fanfare about it. You move into you're new facilities. I see these folks on the side of the bus. I'm tempted to advertise myself. I've never actually did any advertisement."

Mr. William Hutto: "We'll be more than happy to speak with you."

Council Member S. Davis: "Ok, but continue to do the great job that y'all are doing. It really speaks volumes of the assistance that you have provided to citizens in dire need out in the rural part of the County."

Mr. William Hutto: "I want to share one other thing with you. The hardest thing that a transit system has to do is to get somebody out of a car; especially here in the south. Now if you grew up in the north, everybody is used to jumping on a bus and going wherever. Well, when we started our commuter solution routes, that's when gas prices were really going up higher than they are now and boy our ridership took off and then the gas prices started coming down and the first thing we said was: well, that was nice, but I bet it's gone now. The ridership continued to increase so people are now getting out of their car and getting on the bus. It's the first time in the history of my dealings with...and I've been here since 1996, Tri-County Link, that that's happening. This is not a system anymore of those people that cannot afford a vehicle. It's a system of people that want to help the environment, use time wisely, get on the bus ride the commuter bus and actually do their work, or read a paper, and get to work unstressed. So, things have changed. It's not your daddy's RTMA."

Council Member S. Davis: "I got ya. Thank you."

Mr. William Hutto: "Thank you."

Chairman T. Callanan: "Just real quick, Mr. Hutto."

Mr. William Hutto: "Yes?"

Chairman T. Callanan: "Just one more question I wanted to ask you. The funding for these grants, do you know what the source is? Is it partially the gasoline tax?"

Mr. William Hutto: "The gasoline tax is only applicable to the State Mass Fund dollars. We get a certain percentage of that back in state and then ¼ of one penny of the gas tax is allocated to rural transportation in South Carolina with a cap."

Chairman T. Callanan: "Right. Ok, thank you. Thank you so much I appreciate it."

Mr. William Hutto: "Thank you."

Chairman T. Callanan: "With that I'm going to entertain a motion to adjourn."

Council Member J. Schurlknight: "So move."

Committee Member D. Fish: "Second."

Chairman T. Callanan: "We have a motion and a second. All those in favor signify by saying Aye (Ayes). Opposes Nay? (No Response) We are adjourned. Thank you."

The meeting ended at 6:38 p.m.

July 25, 2011

Date Approved

COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY SERVICES

(Standing Committee of Berkeley County Council)

Chairman: Mr. Timothy J. Callanan, District No. 2

Members: Mr. Robert O. Call, Jr., District No. 3
Mrs. Cathy Davis, District No. 4
Mr. Dennis Fish, District No. 5
Mr. Caldwell Pinckney, District No. 7

Mr. Phillip Farley, District No. 1, ex officio
Mr. Jack Schurlknight, District No. 6, ex officio
Mr. Steve C. Davis, District No. 8, ex officio
Mr. Daniel W. Davis, Supervisor, ex officio

A **special meeting** of the **COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY SERVICES**, Standing Committee of Berkeley County Council, will be held on **Monday, June 27, 2011, at 6:00 p.m.**, following other scheduled committee meetings in the Assembly Room, Berkeley County Administration Building, 1003 Highway 52, Moncks Corner, South Carolina.

AGENDA

A. Ms. Barbara A. Flynn, TriCounty Link, Community Outreach Presentation.

June 23, 2011

S/Catherine R. Windham

Acting Clerk of Council